THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) The work order for hiring of Heavy Earth Moving Machinery was issued to M/s. Ravi Udyog, Dhanbad on 23rd March, 1985.

(b) The hiring rate was related to the performance of the fleet of machines as assessed from in-situ measurement of excavation, loading and transportation done by the H. E. M. M.

(c) In the present case since no manual labour was to be engaged on contract for raising of coal or overburden, there has been no violation of any law.

(d) As there was a slight delay in calling for tender, a short tender notice was issued.

Contract system in coal transport in BCCL

3276. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of trucks and other vehicles purchased by the BCCL for carrying coal during the last five years, year-wise;

(b) how many of them were in operation on the 1st July, 1987;

(c) whether it is a fact that most of the departmental vehicles are standing idle while the transport contracts are increasing;

(d) if so, what are the details thereof indicating the amount paid to the coal transport contractors in the collieries during the last five years, year-wise; and

(e) whether this contract system is breeding mafias; if so, the steps taken to end the contract system in coal transport and to optimise the use of departmental vehicles?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Closure of coal mines

3277. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved the closure of a number of coal mines by ECL and BCCL;

(b) if so, what is the number of such coal mines;

(c) what are the reasons for their closure;

(d) whether there is any coal reserve in such mines;

(e) if so, what is the total estimated quantity and its quality and utility; and

(f) what is the effect of such closures on the employment situation?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (f) The Government had appointed the Chari Committee to look into the working of the Eastern Coalfields Limited. The Committee identified 22 coal mines as uneconomical on account of high cost of production and extremely low output per man shift. After examination of the report of the Committee, the Government have directed Coal India Limited/Eastern Coalfields Limited to finalise reconstruction and development schemes in respect of 10 mines and work out a scheme of re-deployment/rationalisation of manpower of the remaining 12 mines with a view to close them ultimately. Eastern Coalfields Limited have decided to close three mines out of these 12 mines for economic/technical reasons. Regarding the remaining mines,